

Destination and Travel Volunteer Recruitment

Utah is one of the nation's most vibrant travel destinations; however, volunteering is not typically in the front of visitors' minds. Utah organizations can present service and volunteerism as a meaningful opportunity for any traveler's itinerary. This resource is to help volunteer managers in Utah maximize their recruitment efforts to target volunteers either traveling to their area or living outside of their community.

Designing Short-Term Volunteer Opportunities

Certain projects benefit from short-term volunteers or even volunteer tourists. These opportunities allow volunteers to give back to the community they are visiting. Positions become more about experiences that mutually benefit the organization and the volunteer.

Be mindful of volunteer opportunities that require knowledge or experience to make an enduring impact. These goals are best achieved with longer-term volunteers who can devote the time and training to make a sustainable contribution. These opportunities may be more impactful when volunteers understand the local culture, programs, relationships, and community.

Short-Term Volunteer Ideas:

- Construction, clean-up and/or sanitation projects
- Sorting organizing and/or distributing supplies, essential items
- Cleaning and beautifying communities, forests, national parks
- Utilizing professional skills in writing, design and/or IT for a local NGO
- Event support
- Socialize shelter animals, assistance for animal charities

Shift Lengths:

The ideal shift length for someone traveling or visiting another city is 3 - 4 hours. Give two options for volunteer shifts: morning and afternoon. Individuals wanting to volunteer more time can sign up for two shifts and/or stay for the afternoon shift. For those on vacation, this offers them the flexibility to volunteer and continue with their trip itinerary. For those traveling within Utah, an afternoon shift may be necessary to travel to their destination. When scheduling morning shifts, avoid early start times.

Position Description:

Always start with a [detailed position description](#). This allows volunteer managers to intentionally map out what the organization needs help with and how the volunteer will support the mission. Be specific about the expectations including commitment, time, location. Include suggested clothing for those unfamiliar with Utah's climate.

Recruiting Message:

Design a [recruitment message](#) to target volunteers traveling or visiting your community. An effective recruitment message includes the statement of need, how the volunteer can help, and the benefits to the organization.

Suggested benefits to include for visitors/travelers:

Intrinsic Motivations examples:

- Volunteering on vacation lets you give back and grow as a family
- Volunteering lets you give back to the community you are visiting/love
- Volunteering will help keep _____ beautiful for generations to come
- Volunteering will help _____ in this community have a better quality of life

Extrinsic Motivations examples:

- Volunteers will receive SWAG after their shift
- Volunteer shifts includes snacks/lunch/drink
- Volunteers will receive a discount to the gift shop/local restaurant etc.
- Volunteer will receive a certificate upon shift completion

Develop Partnerships

First and foremost, develop key partnerships. This is key to the success of recruiting volunteers to a travel, remote or rural destination. Neighboring businesses, organizations, and tourism offices will often promote your volunteer opportunities to visitors. Create marketing collateral (include a QR code to the application) and distribute to the following:

- Visitors Bureau
- Chamber of Commerce
- Visitor Centers
- Conference Centers, Event Venues
- Local Tourism Offices
- Hotels, Airbnb's
- Libraries
- Restaurants
- Entertainment sites (museums, theaters, etc)

Cultivating these partnerships in neighboring cities is also an effective recruitment tool, especially if you are trying to reach other Utahns outside of your community. Consider the areas where Utahns typically travel from and the times of year they visit (i.e. spring break, summer) then design a targeted recruitment strategy.

When developing these partnerships, also consider how it can mutually benefit both entities. One of the biggest benefits of cross promotional activity is expanding your reach. Local businesses may also be willing to offer SWAG, discount codes, and other benefits to your volunteers.

Cross Promotional Ideas:

- Co-branded emails to clients, potential volunteers
- Posting about one another's services on social media
- Sharing marketing collateral of "things to do" before/after they volunteer
- Share advertising cost in local media

Where to Recruit

In addition to working with partners to promote your volunteer opportunities, consider the following places to post your opportunities:

Online Volunteer Recruitment Sites:

- [VolunteerMatch](#)
- [JustServe](#)
- [Points of Light: Engage](#)
- [VolunteerLocal](#)
- [Handshake](#) (for students)
- [Utah Nonprofits Association Job Board](#) (must be a member)
- [OneWorld 365](#)
- [Airbnb Experiences](#)

City Websites, Chamber of Commerce and/or Tourism Office:

- Example: [visitparkcity.com](#)
- Example: [volunteer.greaterzion.com](#)

Resource Directories

- Example: [volunteermoab.org](#)
- [Youthline Local Service Directory](#)

Local Magazines, Newspapers**Community Event Calendars**

- Example: [sgcity.org](#)

Higher Education, Community Service Centers

- List of [Utah colleges](#)

Commitment

One of the biggest challenges for destination and/or travel volunteerism is individuals not showing up to their assignments. There are many variables when traveling is involved, but no-shows can be an added burden to the volunteer manager.

- Always recruit more volunteers than you need. Statistics show that the average percentage of volunteers who actually show up is 61 - 70%.
- Be detailed in your position description about schedule, expectations, location. Include links to maps and directions.

- Send a reminder email or text the day before the event.
- Include contact information for volunteers to reach the volunteer manager if they get lost or delayed
- Have a contingency plan for no-shows. Can the project be done with less volunteers? Can you call on your current/established volunteers to help fill in or finish the project? Can staff/board members step in to help?

Think Outside the Box

Be thoughtful of the different types of volunteers and/or volunteer opportunities you can incorporate, whether it be in-person or offsite positions. Incorporating these strategies will not only help reach destination or traveling volunteers, but also increase your local volunteer support.

Inclusive Volunteering: *Opportunities that provide everyone the chance to volunteer*

- Recruit individuals that don't typically volunteer at your organization (i.e. age, race, gender, income)
- Define and identify barriers with a lens for inclusion, diversity, equity, and access
- Implement new strategies and technologies
- Incorporate opportunities for families and/or students

Virtual Volunteering: *Individuals do not need to live in or visit your community to help*

- Writing thank you/encouragement letters
- Gifting campaign
- Virtual volunteer recognition efforts
- Work virtual event or helpline
- Skills-based volunteering: writing, editing, design, translation, data entry

Micro Volunteering: *Short-term, low-commitment opportunities - can be done offsite*

- Share a post on social media
- Sign a petition
- Donate supplies or collect donations
- Fill out a survey
- Record a video
- Peer-to-peer fundraising